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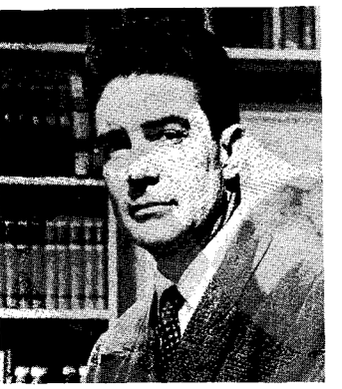

DAN SMOOT

AGRICULTURE AT BAY

On February 4, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson sent his Agriculture Message to Congress. He said:

"Rural America is the scene of one of the greatest productive triumphs in the history of man. Yet, despite its service to the Nation, rural America is also the scene of wasted human talent, where there are too many people without jobs and too many with only part-time jobs . . . .

"Only one out of ten boys now growing up on farms can expect to earn a good living as a full-time farmer. Most young people in rural areas must go elsewhere to find their opportunities . . . .

"Farmers with inadequate resources make up one segment of rural America's great unsolved problem of underemployment. Another is made up of families who have left the farm but have not yet found a place in the non-agricultural sector of the economy . . . .

"Lack of a decent life is almost twice as prevalent in rural America as it is in urban America . . . .

"Rural America has almost three times the proportion of substandard houses found in urban areas . . . .

"Rural people lag almost two years behind urban residents in education attainment . . . .

"Rural communities lag in health facilities . . . ."[1]

After presenting this *dismal* picture of rural America to prove need for his recommended farm programs, the President recommended continuation of programs which have been in existence for 30 years. He presented a *bright* picture of rural America to prove that the programs are effective:

"The commodity programs which were initiated 30 years ago in the Administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt have helped to create a commercially successful agriculture. I propose that these commodity programs be continued and improved.

"Over the past four years our commodity programs have raised and sustained net farm income at an annual level nearly $1 billion above 1960. Few activities so dramatically indicate the value to farmers of good programs well administered . . . ."[1]

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Though President Johnson began his Agriculture Message with a colorful compliment to "the farm people of this nation" for making "a lasting contribution to our national prosperity," he later made clear that he does not really think farmers are due much credit for our "agricultural progress" and "agricultural abundance." He gives the credit to government:

"The skill of our family farmers is not an accident. It is the product of a century of public policy aimed at improvement of our agriculture . . . .

"President Abraham Lincoln . . . founded the Department of Agriculture a century ago and thus started us on the path to abundance . . . ."[1]

President Johnson emphasized that the primary purpose of government's farm program is, and always has been, to assure "parity of income for America's family farmers."

Parity or *parity ratio* is the relationship between prices which farmers get for what they sell, and prices they pay for what they buy — a measure of farmers' prosperity, in terms of purchasing power. Parity ratio is based on indices of prices in a five-year period prior to World War I — 1910-1914. During that period, farmers enjoyed 100% parity. That is, prices they got for what they sold were adequate in comparison with prices they paid for non-farm products. If prices of non-farm products rise more sharply than prices of farm products (or conversely, if prices of farm products fall more sharply than other prices) the parity of income for farmers declines.[2]

In 1930, before initiation of federal farm programs, farmers' parity of income was 83%.[2] In 1964 (after net expenditure of 41 billion, 759 million, 384 thousand, two hundred and twenty-seven federal tax dollars — $41,759,384,227.00 — to help family farmers),[3] farmers' parity of income had declined to 75%.[4]

The vast outlay of public money has accomplished the opposite of its announced purpose: it has encouraged corporation farming — the growth of huge estates owned by absentee landlords, managed by resident professionals.

Government programs have enriched operators of big farming syndicates and dishonest operators like Billie Sol Estes, while millions of little farmers, unable to compete, have become farm hired hands, or moved to the cities.

In 1930 (before the government initiated programs to save the little farmer), there were 6,289,000 farms in the United States. The farm population was 30,158,000. In 1963, there were 3,711,000 farms; and the farm population was 13,367,000. As the number of "little farmers" decreased, the size of farms increased. An average farm of 1963 was about twice the size of an average farm in 1930.[5]

In his 1965 Agriculture Message, President Johnson avoided the old theme about saving the little farmer as a symbol of our way of life and the backbone of our economy. Indeed, there is more than a hint in the President's message that the small family farm is already doomed — and that government must now help provide city employment for displaced farmers, and subsidize the establishment of industries in rural areas.

History

Federal farm programs were first authorized by Congress in the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933. In 1936, the Supreme Court (in the Butler Case) held the AAA unconstitutional. Roosevelt's threat to pack the Court in 1937, together with the demise of some of the "nine old men," changed the complexion of the Court. So, the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 (even worse than the AAA of 1933) was approved by the new Supreme Court as constitutional.[2]

In the 1930's, Henry Wallace was Franklin D. Roosevelt's Secretary of Agriculture. Surrounded by communists (who, official investigation later disclosed, actually conceived the new-deal farm programs),[6] Wallace paid farmers to destroy crops and animals. It was a preposterous program, bound to do great harm; but World War II erupted in 1939; and war-stimulated demands for

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agricultural products solved our "farm surplus" problem for several years and obscured damage that government's farm programs were doing.

The parity ratio for farmers' income rose to 113% in 1943 and remained above 100% until 1949, when it started a decline. President Harry S Truman recommended the Brannan plan — a program of direct federal payments to give farmers a minimum annual income which officialdom wanted them to have, regardless of merit, production, market demands, or anything else. Congress rejected the Brannan plan.[2]

The Korean war created enough demand for agricultural goods to solve the farm problem again, temporarily, and hide the absurdities of the government's farm programs. The parity ratio for farmers' income rose to 107% in 1951, and then started a steady decline, dropping to 83% in 1956 — exactly where it was in 1930 before federal farm programs began.[2]

Volumes could be filled with accounts of outrageous incidents in the federal government's farm programs. Here are a few samples from the post-Korean war period:

—Canadian potatoes were smuggled across the border and turned over to the federal government under high price-support loans, and then destroyed by the government as surplus, at a time when potatoes were so high in American grocery stores that many families could not afford them.

—The government had millions of bales of "surplus" cotton in storage. Storage alone was costing taxpayers an estimated one million dollars a day. Yet, American textile manufacturers, whose taxes helped pay for the cotton program, could not get American raw cotton for their mills as cheaply as their foreign competitors in Japan and elsewhere could get it. At the same time, American tax money, given away in foreign aid, provided irrigation, machinery, and production techniques to multiply cotton production in foreign nations (Egypt, Brazil, India, Mexico) which began capturing world markets for cotton, while American cotton was going into federal storage.

—Farmers turned their entire corn crops over to the government under high price-support loans, then bought corn they needed in the open market for 60¢-a-bushel less than the government had paid them for their own corn.

—In 1954, the government bought ninety million pounds of cheese from big cheese distributors and then, a few days later, without ever taking possession of the cheese, sold the cheese back to the distributors for 15% less than the government had paid for it.

—Although federal subsidies caused the accumulation of costly surpluses in government storage, government fined small farmers who refused to accept federal subsidies: farmers who rejected federal controls and federal handouts because they wanted to raise grain on their own land to feed their livestock.

—The government cracked down on a filling-station operator for raising a little cotton which he wanted to give away as souvenirs to customers.

—In 1955, the United States, with billions of dollars' worth of surplus food commodities in government storage, imported more food products than it exported (the same thing happened again in 1962).[7]

Eisenhower

Eisenhower's administration tried to solve our farm-surplus problem with the foreign-disposal operation (later called "Food For Peace" program), conducted under the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954. Under this law, we sell and give our farm surpluses to foreign nations. Sales under the law (amounting, to date, to about 60 percent of total surpluses disposed of abroad) are made for the local currency of receiving nations.[8] These sales, presumably, do not damage world markets, because they are not gifts. Yet, they are not really sales.

For example, we sell wheat to communist Poland, accepting payment in Polish currency. We cannot

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bring Polish money home to help lighten the tax burden on Americans, or use it in other nations in place of American dollars, because Polish money is soft currency, not acceptable outside of Poland. The Polish money which we get for our wheat can be spent only in Poland. We use a tiny fraction of it to pay American embassy expenses in Poland, but most of it is given to the communist government there to build steel mills and other industrial plants. Proceeds of our wheat sales to Poland can be used to produce commodities which compete with American goods. Poland can resell some of our wheat abroad for American dollars, thus accumulating claims on our gold reserve. She can use some of it in barter deals with other communist countries, thereby enabling those countries to get a commodity they need and to dispose of others they have in surplus.

Seven years after enactment of the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954 (for the primary purpose of reducing our agricultural surpluses) our government had in storage surplus farm commodities worth about nine billion, 400 million dollars ($9,400,000,000.00)[9]— almost twice as much as it had stored in 1954 when the act was passed.

A secondary purpose of the 1954 act was to win worldwide friendship. Within six years, anti-American feeling had spread more widely and reached higher peaks of intensity than ever before in our history: American embassies and information libraries were mobbed and ransacked in all parts of the world; our Vice President and his wife were spat upon and pelted with garbage while on a good-will tour abroad; our President was ordered to cancel a planned good-will trip to Japan because of anti-American rioting there.

From 1954 through 1964, the Food-For-Peace program cost American taxpayers at least 21 billion, 300 million dollars ($21,300,000,000.00).[4] Government statistics on its own operations have always been confusing and contradictory, particularly with regard to farm programs and foreign aid. Since the beginning of the Kennedy-Johnson administration in 1961 (when government officially adopted the policy that news about its own operations should be "managed" to present the public a favorable image), current reliable statistics are often non-existent.

Should the 21.3 billion-dollar cost of the Food-For-Peace program from 1954 through 1964 be added to the 41.7 billion-dollar net cost of the government's agricultural programs from 1933 through 1964, to get the total cost, to taxpayers, of our government's efforts to solve the farm problem? If so, the federal government's programs to support agricultural prices and to dispose of the resulting surpluses cost at least 63 billion dollars for the 31-year period, 1933 through 1964.

This does not include billions which government has spent to help farmers, through the Rural Electrification Administration, the Farmers Home Administration, the Federal Land Banks, the Farm Credit Administration, and so on. Yet, the present parity ratio for farmers' income is eight percentage points less than in 1930, before all the spending began.[2,4]

Having failed to solve the farm-surplus problem with the Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act of 1954, Eisenhower's administration, in 1956, produced a new "solution." Instead of paying farmers to destroy crops and animals already raised, as the Democrats had done 20 years before, Republicans initiated the soil bank — paying owners to keep their land idle and not raise anything.

Legalized racketeering in the government's farm programs multiplied rapidly under the soil-bank law.

There were great expanses of land in eastern Colorado and western Nebraska that could be bought for $15.00 to $25.00 an acre. People with money bought a great deal of it and put it in the soil bank for seven years at $6.00 per acre each year. By 1963, they had collected from the government — for doing nothing — $42.00 an acre on land that had cost them, on an average, about half that amount. In some instances, landowners

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who got soil-bank payments for keeping their land idle also got the soil conservation service to pay 75% of the cost of putting the land into good permanent grass, while it was in the soil bank.

In the deep South, people with money bought worn-out cotton farms for $35.00 an acre and "banked" it with the government for 10 years at $7.00 an acre each year. At the same time, some of the new owners got the government to pay 80% of the cost of clearing the idle land and planting it in timber.

Not all land owners who banked their soil had enough capital or were willing to use their capital (even with government aid) to improve the land while it lay idle. Hence, much of the land "banked with the government" was ruined. During the past few weeks, I have looked at many acres of land (formerly, rich loamy soil) which has lain unused in the soil bank since the late 1950's. Some of it is so badly eroded that more than 50% of the rich top soil has been lost forever. Much of it is a wilderness of weeds and brush, useless for *any* productive purpose without heavy expenditure to reclaim and restore it.

There was a provision in the soil-bank law, putting a limit of $5,000 on the amount that one person could get in one year for "banking" idle land;[10] but the provision was easy to circumvent. Out in the high-plains country of Texas, for example, where land comes in big pieces, a man could buy 10 sections (6400 acres) and put the whole piece in the soil bank at $9.00 an acre — for a total of $57,600.00 a year. The trick was to bank the land in the names of relatives so that no one person got more than $5,000 a year from the government.

The Tallman case is a classic illustration of a soil-bank operation. Wayne E. Tallman bought a 6,960-acre ranch in Colorado for $139,200 and then, through a maze of complicated subleasing arrangements, placed 3,879 acres of the ranch in the soil bank in such a way that, in ten years, the government would pay him $271,000 for doing nothing. During those ten years, Tallman or his agents, would have use of approximately half the ranch. In substance, the federal government gave Wayne Tallman a $139,200 ranch and $131,800 in cash in return for Tallman's agreement to do nothing, during the first ten years of his ownership, with approximately half the ranch.[11]

Before setting up this deal, Wayne Tallman, on February 14, 1957, outlined it to the Department of Agriculture agency in his county (Kiowa County Agricultural Stabilization Committee) and got official approval.[11]

On the other hand, consider the James Weir case. Weir owned a 944-acre rice farm (near Lake Village, Arkansas) which he valued at $300,000. In April, 1962, agents of the federal government sold Weir's farm at auction for $60,000 to collect fines imposed on Weir for overplanting his rice-acreage allotments. Weir had sacrificed his farm in a fruitless attempt to show that the farm program is unconstitutional and that farmers want to be free men, not controlled wards of government.[12] Weir's experience contrasts sharply with that of another rice producer who, in one year, received $486,725 from the federal government for surplus rice.

Thought processes of political liberals are revealed in the record of the 84th Congress, which enacted the soil-bank law in 1956 — authorizing expenditure of at least 750 million dollars a year in payments to landowners for taking productive land out of use.[10] Just before passing the soil-bank law, the 84th Congress passed (and President Eisenhower approved) a bill authorizing the Upper Colorado River dam and irrigation project — to irrigate and put in cultivation high arid land never before cultivated.[13]

Kennedy

On March 16, 1961, President John F. Kennedy proposed a new program to solve the farm problem. The program was devised by Dr. Willard W. Cochrane, Minnesota economist who had

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been Kennedy's chief farm adviser during the 1960 campaign.[14]

The Cochrane plan prescribed a supply-management system in which committees of farmers, under control of the Secretary of Agriculture (with Congress having only a negative veto vote if it disapproved) would regulate production and income of American farmers. This scheme would have created a system similar to agricultural systems in communist countries.

Congress rejected the Cochrane plan in 1961, but did extend existing farm programs. Congress also passed Kennedy's Emergency Feed Grains bill — providing for a rise in price supports for feed grains, payments in cash and kind for farmers who agreed to reduce acreage of corn and grain sorghums by 20 to 40 percent, and loss of eligibility for price supports on feed grains by farmers who did not participate in the acreage-reduction plan.[14]

In 1962, Kennedy asked Congress to authorize a modified version of the Cochrane plan — eliminating the Farmers' Committee proposal of 1961, and eliminating the proposal that Congress abandon its legislative function and grant the Secretary of Agriculture authority to do anything he likes, subject only to congressional veto. Kennedy's 1962 proposals retained the supply-management feature of the 1961 Cochrane plan. This would have provided tight, dictatorial regimentation of all farmers producing major commodities then in great surplus (wheat, corn, grain, sorghum, and barley).[15]

The Secretary of Agriculture would have been empowered to allot acreages, telling farmers how many acres to plant, how many to leave idle or put to other use; to guarantee a high price for authorized crops; to pay farmers for not planting idle acres — or, to give them "land use" aid for authorized "other uses." Some "other uses" specified were soil and water conservation, development of recreational facilities, and wild-life preservation.[15]

Dr. Cochrane (creator of Kennedy's supply-management farm plan) and Orville Freeman (Kennedy's Secretary of Agriculture) admitted that the scheme would mean granting (by sale or gift) a federal franchise to farm.[16] The value of a man's farm would depend not on the quality of his land or on the labor and investment he put into improvements, but on the kind of federal franchise he had.

In 1962, Congress again rejected Kennedy's supply-management farm plan, but did convert the *emergency* feed-grains program of 1961 into a *permanent* program — authorizing the Secretary of Agriculture to support feed-grains prices (as high as 90% of parity), requiring no acreage limits or other production curtailment. This permanent program of supporting feed-grains prices (said to be needed because of over-production of feed grains) went into effect in 1964.[15] In 1964, Congress enacted and President Johnson approved a bill authorizing 47 million dollars for three irrigation projects in the Upper Colorado River Basin: projects which will put 65,000 acres of land into *production of feed grains.*[17]

In 1962, Congress also authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a wheat referendum in 1963 to determine whether the supply-management system should be adopted for wheat.[15]

The Kennedy administration mobilized the resources of the federal government to get a resounding *yes* vote in the wheat referendum of May, 1963 — hoping to show that America's farmers wanted high price supports and tight regimentation. But the wheat farmers (despite all the prestige and power, and even threats, of federal officialdom) voted *no.* Consequently, no farm legislation was passed in 1963, and none of major consequence in 1964.

Johnson

President Johnson proposed nothing new in his Agriculture Message of 1965. He revived the

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Kennedy-Cochrane proposal for making farmers subject to federal franchise — though he did not state the proposal in just that way. President Johnson recommended that farmers be allowed to sell or lease their federal acreage allotments — a practice, now illegal, which has produced many multi-million-dollar scandals in the past. Imagine the scandalous profiteering at taxpayers' expense which will occur if the practice is legalized. Individuals who know the right people, or who support the right political candidates, can get federal acreage allotments which they may sell to others.

President Johnson asked Congress to supplement present farm programs with a "long-term Cropland Adjustment Program"; but this is merely an elaboration of the Kennedy "Land Use" proposals of 1961 and 1962 — a scheme to take cropland *permanently* out of agricultural production, by buying it for public parks or lakes, or by paying owners to develop it for industrial, recreational, or other uses.[1]

What To Do

In each Congress, for several years, U. S. Representative E. Ross Adair (Indiana Republican) has made the *only* proposal which would *really* solve our farm problem: he has introduced legislation to repeal the Agricultural Adustment Act of 1938, as amended, thus getting the government out of the farming business, leaving farmers free to solve their own problems in their own way.

The Adair Bill (which Mr. Adair plans to introduce again in the present Congress) merits energetic support from every American (farmer and urban dweller alike) who wants to restore American constitutional government. Conversely, every farm proposal thus far made by President Johnson deserves energetic opposition.

* * * * *

Reports on an American Tragedy

I am most grateful to readers of this *Report* who have answered my plea for wide circulation of "Civil Rights Or Civil War?" Many, to whom you have sent that issue of the *Report,* have asked for more details.

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Vol. 11, No. 8 — Civil Rights Or Civil War?

WHO IS DAN SMOOT?

Born in Missouri, reared in Texas, Dan Smoot went to SMU getting BA and MA degrees, 1938 and 1940. In 1941, he joined the faculty at Harvard as a Teaching Fellow, doing graduate work for a doctorate in American civilization. From 1942 to 1951, he was an FBI agent: three and a half years on communist investigations; two years on FBI headquarters staff; almost four years on general FBI cases in various places. He resigned from the FBI and, from 1951 to 1955, was commentator on national radio and television programs, giving *both* sides of controversial issues. In July, 1955, he started his present profit-supported, free-enterprise business: publishing *The Dan Smoot Report,* a weekly magazine available by subscription; and producing a weekly news-analysis radio and television broadcast, available for sponsorship by reputable business firms, as an advertising vehicle. The *Report* and broadcast give *one* side of important issues: the side that presents documented truth using the American Constitution as a yardstick. If you think Smoot's materials are effective against socialism and communism, you can help immensely—help get subcribers for the *Report,* commercial sponsors for the broadcast.

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I urge you to help give maximum distribution to *all six* of these *Reports*. They present historical and current information, not available elsewhere, on a problem which has become an American Tragedy. Public understanding of the problem must precede solution.

Order the set of six *Reports* now, and put them in the hands of others. Ruthless leaders are manipulating others as pawns in a frightfully dangerous revolutionary operation. We *can* stop this destruction of orderly society.

FOOTNOTES

(1) "Text of President Johnson's Feb. 4 Agriculture Message," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, February 5, 1965, pp. 212-5

(2) *U. S. Agricultural Policy In The Postwar Years* — 1945-1963, Congressional Quarterly Service, 1963, 89 pp.

(3) Source: Department of Agriculture, *The World Almanac for* 1965, New York World-Telegram Corp., 1965, p. 752

(4) Speech by U. S. Senator Jack Miller (Rep., Iowa), *Congressional Record*, February 8, 1965, pp. 2223-5 (daily)

(5) *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to* 1957, U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1960, pp. 9, 36, 47, 280; *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 1962, Bureau of the Census, 1962, p. 610; *The World Almanac for* 1965, New York World-Telegram Corp., 1965, pp. 284, 677

(6) *Interlocking Subversion in Government Departments*, Report of the Internal Security Subcommittee of the U. S. Senate Judiciary Committee, July 30, 1953, p. 44

(7) *The World Almanac for* 1965, New York World-Telegram Corp., 1965, pp. 694, 713

(8) *Food For Peace: Building a Better World*, Agency for International Development of the State Department, March, 1963, 20 pp.

(9) Newsletter by U. S. Representative Harold C. Ostertag (Rep., N. Y.), February 15, 1962

(10) "Agriculture Act of 1956," *United States Code*; 84th Congress, Second Session, 1956, Vol. 2, West Publishing Co. and Edward Thompson Co., pp. 2557-83

(11) Speech by U. S. Senator John J. Williams (Rep., Dela.), *Congressional Record*, February 24, 1961, pp. 2473-4 (daily), 2649-50 (bound)

(12) Extension of Remarks of U. S. Representative Paul Findley (Rep., Ill.), *Congressional Record*, May 1, 1962, p. A 3185 (daily)

(13) "Colorado River Storage Project — Authority to Construct, Operate and Maintain," *United States Code*; 84th Congress, Second Session, 1956, Vol. 1, West Publishing Co. and Edward Thompson Co., pp. 133-40

(14) *Congressional Quarterly Almanac for* 1961, pp. 104-41

(15) *Congressional Quarterly Almanac for* 1962, pp. 94-143

(16) *U. S. News & World Report*, June 11, 1962, pp. 54-5

(17) *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, August 7, 1964, p. 1685; August 28, 1964, p. 1976; and September 25, 1964, p. 2262

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